

2002-Eckhart Tolle Choose to Awaken Now

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 2:36:42)

Welcome to this afternoon we are spending together. As I was sitting in the back room just now, at five to one, a voice came through the loudspeaker and said, this is your five-minute warning, show time in five minutes. That's what they do in theaters.

So this must be show time. But of course it's not a performance, there may be an association in your mind of theater, stage, well there's no curtain but there could be, an association in your mind of this kind of setting with performance, but it's been canceled. And instead all you get is a man sitting in a chair speaking.

And not even someone who has very much of a stage presence. So if you expected a performance or even if you expected a lecture, that's not what you're getting. You're getting less than that and more than that at the same time.

The focal point this afternoon is not here on the speaker, the main character in this non-performance is sitting down there in that chair. And the words will always point you back to that. If you think there's something interesting out here, there isn't.

If you expected food for thought, you probably won't get very much. So just a few words I'd like to say about how to be here this afternoon. Because if you don't know how to be here fully, very quickly it's going to get boring and uninteresting.

Because you're not getting enough stimulus for thinking. And in an event like this with so many people, it's inevitable that a few are going to walk out after 20 or 30 minutes. They knew not how to be here fully.

They were not completely present here. They were absorbed in the stream of thinking, which is normal. One reason why we are here is that you're being taken out of the stream of thinking and realize that you haven't disappeared, that when you step out of the stream of thinking, consciousness is still there.

You're fully conscious sitting there listening. It's awareness that doesn't need thought. This is the new level of consciousness that's arising in human beings.

Otherwise so many people wouldn't be here. Certainly not to experience this speaker hasn't got that much to offer. But something is happening within you that corresponds to these words.

The words point back to that. And the words and that which is beyond the words here in this field pulls that level of consciousness, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, out of you, so to speak. But it is already arising in most of you.

Otherwise you wouldn't be here, with the exception perhaps of those who came here involuntarily because of insistence of their husband or wife. You must come to this. Okay.

I might as well check this guy out. Okay. And then after 20 minutes, what's he talking about?

I can't, I just can't figure out what it is that he's talking about. And then restlessness comes in because not enough stimulus is being given to the mind. It's often starts with a twitching leg that was designed by universal intelligence to wake you up.

Nothing better than waking up a little shock. And life tends to do that to us. The little ego says, please, no, I don't want any of this.

But it happens. So there's the twitching, restless, and finally, can't stand this anymore. So there may be quite a few of you who have never come to a talk like this.

So just a few pointers of how to be here, not just as a mind or as a head attached to a body. And you know, when you're a head attached to a body, you're always uneasy and waiting for the next thing. When is he going to say something meaningful?

Some interesting new theory that I can believe in or disagree with even better. That keeps it going. I disagree completely.

So one thing we surrender here this afternoon is this inner need, which is the human mind. This enormous inner need, usually unrecognized because it's so normal. This enormous inner need for the next moment.

When you look at people, you can actually see they're looking for it. They are overlooking always this. And they're looking there, the next moment.

And with that comes that continuous state of unease with this moment. This moment becomes a hindrance to where I need to get, to the next moment that's going to fulfill me or do something for me. Let's get there.

Where is it? That's the normal human state. And if you cannot step out of that, you will not be able to survive this afternoon here.

So how do you step out of that momentum of the thought processes that are always moving towards the next thing? Move your attention into this moment. First thing that it means for many people, when the attention moves out of thinking into presence, they become more acutely aware of their sense perceptions, their surroundings.

A certain alertness arises, as if you had been away and now suddenly you're back. And it is true, you had been away, your attention, your whole sense of identity was absorbed by thought processes, most of them problematic. Another problem to solve before I can

be free.

So why we are here this afternoon is to experience at first hand what many of you are experiencing already and know it. And many others who are present here experience already without knowing it. And I will be pointing to that to see that you can recognize that this state of presence is already probably arising in you, even if you don't know it yet, because it is not recognized by the movement of thought.

It is not recognized by the mind made me. It recognizes its problems, it recognizes its need for the next moment. It cannot recognize the state of awareness, the arising presence.

But we are here in this field to enable that state of consciousness to arise more fully. So your attention moves into the field of now. And a very helpful thing that I may be pointing to quite a few times during this afternoon as you sit here is to feel a certain connectedness with your inner energy field, the inner body.

To sense that you are alive. To have a, to feel, to sense a little bit the inner energy field of your body, hands, legs. There is a certain aliveness there.

Usually you would not be aware of it because all your attention is absorbed by thinking. Now you place some attention away from thinking into the sense of aliveness in the body as you sit here. That provides an anchor for staying present here.

And this, you'll be able to listen much better when you are present here. Anchored within the body. Inhabiting the body as you sit here.

And feel a certain aliveness. Maybe you cannot feel it everywhere yet, but a certain aliveness is there. That's enough to have some attention there.

Then the rest of your attention is on the sense perceptions, especially listening and seeing. So being present here, it is an amazing shift in consciousness. And yet, to the mind, it is meaningless.

It is insignificant. It doesn't even recognize it. It says, so this can't be important.

My problems are important. How does it solve my problems? It does.

What is coming to an end, what has to come to an end on this planet very soon, is a state of consciousness that is totally identified with thinking. Where you only know yourself as thought processes. And you're totally identified with whatever happens and experience the corresponding emotions that go with those thoughts.

That is the egoic mind-made entity, me, with its little story. With its unsatisfactory story. Never satisfying for long, the story of me.

Always something comes in to sabotage the story the way it should be going. And certainly it hasn't gone the way it was supposed to go, this story of me. But I still have some future to make it work.

The mind-made entity, conditioned by its surroundings, its past, to only know yourself as that, that is coming to an end as the normal human state of consciousness. Because that excessive identification with thought processes prevents you from knowing who you are at the deeper levels of your being. You remain a surface phenomenon, an uneasy ripple or wave movement on the surface.

Just here, always never sensing that deep connectedness with who you are underneath the movement of thought. And that leads to dreadful madness on the planet. The madness that we experience in interpersonal relationships.

The collective madness on the planet. There are certain focal points on the planet where you can see the collective madness more clearly than others. But it is everywhere.

And when you get to the root of it, all that which creates this enormous amount of violence and suffering on the planet, and is even threatening the survival of the planet, what is at the root of that, what one could only describe as dysfunction, human dysfunction, of which we have seen so much in the 20th century, and what we are seeing now is a continuation of it. What is it that lies at the root of all that? But that is also within ourselves still, although the new is arising, the old consciousness, the mind-identified state is still there, it comes in waves.

There was an article written last week in the New York Times by an Israeli writer about the madness in the Middle East that we are witnessing there. And he used an interesting expression, he tried to get to the bottom of it. What is it that makes people behave in such a way?

And he came up with a very interesting realization, but perhaps did not realize himself how profound the implications are of this realization that he came up with. What he said was, the people who are involved in this conflict do not seem to have the ability, now he used an interesting expression, the ability to accommodate a competing narrative. Narrative means it is the story that you are telling yourself and others which interprets your life situation.

A narrative can be a personal narrative, that is the story you are telling yourself and others about who you are. And a narrative can be a collective story, that is the story that everybody who is part of this nation or tribe is telling themselves and others and is reinforced continuously, which is their interpretation of how things are. And each side has its narrative and then there is a competing narrative that is the opposite of my narrative.

Every narrative is a story, every story is mind movement, is thought structures. Every story is the movement of thought which becomes, certain thought structures become deeply lodged in the mind and they hang on in there. This is how it is.

And your sense of self, your sense of identity, your sense of who you are becomes entangled with that narrative. Now people do that on a personal level, in their own personal lives and in some places more than others, less so in countries like the one we are. But in certain countries the collective narrative still has enormous hold on people.

The collective mental conditioning overwhelms the mind and every personal sense of self, it really is predominantly dominated by the collective us and our story, our narrative. This is how things are and you find that collective identification very strong in all those places where there is an enormous amount of conflict and violence. And so there is the seeming inability to see what is happening that I am identifying with a particular way of interpreting reality.

And I am mistaking a thought or a set of thoughts for the truth of how things are or the truth of who I am, if it's on the personal level. So people do it collectively and personally to themselves. Certain ideas form in your mind who you are, conditioning, parents told you, society tells you.

Or you react against what parents told you and society tells you of who you are and it's also conditioned. Then your sense of self is in the movement of thought and there are certain repetitive thought movements that then provide you with your sense of self. Personal, predominantly personal or predominantly collective.

And there is the inability to see the limitations of thought. The inability to see that ultimately no thought that you have concerning anything or anybody, yourself, a situation, a place, truth, it cannot encompass the truth. A thought at best will give you an aspect of the truth.

Every thought that you think about anything or anybody is a temporary perspective. When you know thought to be a temporary perspective, thought is beautiful. Thought enables you to do many things.

When you forget, when you do not know that every thought that you have about anything or anybody is one of many, many possible perspectives on this person, on this situation, on this place, whatever it may be. When you don't know that, you mistake an interpretation, a thought, a judgment. Jesus used the word judgment a lot.

What he's really talking about is thought because ultimately every thought is a judgment. As long as you know that, it's fine. You can use thinking, thinking arises, but the illusion that anything that you can express through thought can embody the absolute truth is not there anymore.

That means when your sense of who you are is totally identified with the story that you are telling yourself and others, that is an illusory sense of self and most people are trapped in it. Not just the people in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or wherever there may be long-standing conflict that's been going on for in some places hundreds of years. In what used to be Yugoslavia, they've been fighting for hundreds of years.

Every generation absorbs the same mental conditioning, identifies with the same thought structures that says we are right, we are that and that, and they are totally mind. Then you are a mind-made entity. You don't know who you are beyond that and all your entire life then is designed to strengthen that ultimately illusory entity, me and my story or us and our story.

That entity is a thought form consisting of different thoughts that come together and that entity says me, I or us, we and them. And because that sense of identity is so fearful and fragile because deep down you don't feel that you really know yourself, so it has to be reinforced by having the other to fight against. I define myself when I am trapped in a mind-made thought-based sense of self, whether collective or personal or a mixture.

I am trapped in an illusion that seeks to strengthen itself, that seeks to strengthen its boundary, me and my mental position, my story, my truth. Of course you don't call it my truth, you call it the truth. And it needs the other to define itself through, it needs some kind of conflict or enemy out there because then that state of self that is mind-made feels stronger for a moment and then you need some more.

You can see it in your personal life as the need to be right in an argument. The enormous need to be right that has a lot of emotion with it. You have expressed your thoughts, somebody else says the exact opposite and says you're completely wrong.

What do you mean? And people usually in a situation like that become totally unconscious. What that means, I'm not saying that they faint, they become unconscious, it's almost like fainting, they become unconscious in the sense that they are totally identified with thought.

That spiritually speaking means unconscious, totally identified with thought processes and the emotions that go with them. And that happens when there's total identification with thought as me, a mental position as me. And you can see in relationships, partners, how very easily they start arguing and each person identifies with their mental position.

This is how it is. No, it's not. And this has been going on for many thousands, thousands, hundreds of thousands of years and even intensifying that identification with thinking, intensifying.

It was a necessary stage in human evolution. It all started with the apple. Because the apple came from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It is the arising of thought. Yes, no, right, wrong, yes. You can tell the difference between this and that.

Thought is the ability to separate, to cut up into little pieces, to analyze. And we had, humanity had to go through it. It was an evolutionary stage and I'm saying it was, although we are still in it to a large extent, but we are coming out of it.

And as this evolutionary stage reaches its end, the dysfunction increases. Because, simply, it's coming to an end. When it no longer works, that's all.

It doesn't work anymore for survival. For a long time, it helped humans to survive. They could think about how to make a trap and do this.

And then it has served its purpose. It becomes dysfunctional, just as the caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it becomes a butterfly. Life doesn't work anymore as a caterpillar.

It's getting too hard. I can't crawl anymore. But of course, something in the caterpillar says, no, I'm not going to change.

That's just what I am. Oh, it's fearful. What's going to happen to me?

So this, the conflict in the Middle East, is just one example of a dysfunction in the human mind, which this writer expressed in those words, he called it, the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, which means to see another perspective and see all. And to recognize thought, every thought, as a fragment, not the truth, a fragment. So this, whenever you see, whatever you can say about another human being, is a temporary truth, a temporary relative fragment.

You can say, he's a dreadful, he's the worst criminal I've ever met. Okay, this is one perspective. Maybe true at this moment.

But you may not have seen him interacting with his child. You may not have seen him at the age of six. You may not see him in twenty years' time when he's enlightened, become free through his suffering.

But thought fixes everything. It wants to fix things. This is how it is.

Conclusions, premature conclusions that you draw concerning people, events, situations. The mind is looking out for that. It's waiting.

Whenever this mind-made entity meets someone, it's already beginning to judge. How does this person fit into my thought structures? And then five minutes later it has an opinion.

And often then that opinion is there, it's fixed. And then it's repeated to others. And then

people cling to their opinions.

It's part of who I think I am, me as mind. So the movement that is happening in human consciousness, happening now for the first time on a wider scale, because it has to happen for the species to survive, is a movement out of thought. Out of identification with thought.

The arising of something within you that is deeper than thought. Now what is thought? Thought is one of the many forms that consciousness takes.

Consciousness in humans manifests to a large extent as thought. Consciousness manifests, the one consciousness manifests as an entire universe. Flowers, trees, the planet, animals, temporary formations, galaxies.

And in humans it becomes thought. And to realize the vastness that is there underneath thought. And that is the arising of a new dimension of consciousness.

It doesn't mean that you are not going to think anymore. Thought still comes. But complete belief in every thought that comes, that doesn't happen anymore.

In other words, as this begins, you are beginning to have a new relationship to thought. You can see thought that happens inside you. The reactivity of thought, very strong.

The reactivity of the thought made me. What's the next thing I can react to? To strengthen myself.

To have a little enemy, at least for a few moments. And in having a little enemy, which can be a situation that I'm complaining about, a person, having a little enemy for a moment, makes me feel more strongly I can sense who I am. You did that to me.

It is satisfying to the entity, the egoic entity for a moment, it feels stronger in its sense of self. Every time it complains about something, there's a contraction in my sense of self and also a strengthening of the mind made entity. And then it's looking out, what's the next thing I can react to?

It's a wheel. It sits behind a wheel in a car. Some people habitually, they carry their waiting for the next thing to react to and you might think it's always another person.

That is, everyone to some extent carries that inside. This is not a personal shortcoming. Of yours.

It is not a personal thing at all. It is collective conditioning of the human mind. It is a collective structure.

The need to react, the need to have a problem, an enemy somewhere, it's unconscious. When you make it conscious, when it happens, you see it. You see it.

I'm right. And you feel the emotion that goes with being right. With your partner, wherever.

And it's an amazing thing when you watch that in yourself. You can see it in others more easily, of course. Look how unconscious he is.

I can't believe how unconscious you are. To see something in oneself, a reaction, a identification with a mental position, and suddenly to see it, perhaps in the middle of it, is enough. And not even to say, oh, I shouldn't be having that reaction.

I'm an advanced spiritual person. I shouldn't be having that, something is wrong here. But there it is.

And the advanced spiritual person, how does one become an advanced spiritual person? Does it require a lot of knowledge or some arduous practice of self-denial through beating yourself up or sitting in the cold for hours, meditate? I'm going to get there.

I'm going to get there. The advanced spiritual person is the person that allows this moment to be. Is that it?

Allows this moment to be because... Why should I allow this moment to be? Because it is.

Because it always is as it is now. Yeah, but it shouldn't be. But it is.

Yeah, but this is not how it should be. It still is. And then you see that you go through life, or you have been going through life, a lot of your life has been an inner no.

No. And the egoic mind-made entity thrived on the no. It thrives on having enemies.

It doesn't need to go as far as to make you into a suicide bomber. It could. That's an extreme manifestation of the same thing.

It thrives on that. And then, of course, it says, I can't allow this to be. There are so many things in this world that should not be.

There are so many things in this world that are unjust, unfair. So much suffering, so much... Yes, of course, that is true, that there is an enormous amount of suffering in this world.

And in yourself, suffering is present in every human being in different forms. In the affluent West, there is an enormous amount of suffering too, not perhaps on the material level, mental, emotional suffering. And the illusion is to believe that when I allow this moment to be, I will become ineffective, I will become passive, and nothing is going to change anymore.

I will be stuck with this dreadful moment for the rest of my life. So to get rid of this

dreadful moment, I've got to fight it. And then, of course, the next moment, which is the same as this moment, dreadful again.

That state... And here we have an approach, another perspective on what it means to be fully awake here and now. We pointed already to the helpful fact that you can feel the inner body as you sit here, even now.

That takes you out of the stream of thinking and thinking. And then you can become conscious of this moment instead of running away from it, or internally denying it, fighting it. You can become conscious of how things are right now.

This is how things are. And you allow. And what is could be a reaction inside yourself.

It could be an old... And then you see it, and don't make it into a problem, and you watch the emotion that comes with it. There it is.

You allow that. So you don't become an advanced spiritual practitioner by achieving something, total control of all my inner states, and total control of external conditions. I am in total control of my life.

This is of course the ego field. I need to lie awake in bed all night because I have important problems to think about. If I don't worry, my life is going to fall apart.

I'll be irresponsible. Or as one famous actress said, I read in the paper some while ago, who by the way is always ill, she said about some situation, she said, I wouldn't be human if I didn't worry myself sick about it. And worry is identification with thought.

And useless thought, a lot of it of course, even psychologists who are not interested in spiritual matters have recognized that 95% of our thinking is pretty repetitive and useless. And one way of stepping out of it, that entire conditioned movement needs reactivity, needs opposition, needs resistance. It's the mind made entity.

So when now the possibility arises of living in a different way, and if it were not happening already, I could not make it happen to you. The fact that you are here and recognize something, some truth that you already know, that is already happening inside you, that means you don't need convincing, you recognize the fundamental truth of living, that there is the possibility now, perhaps there wasn't before for most humans, that there is the possibility now of living in alignment with the suchness of this moment. Inner alignment.

And that is the state out of which, amazingly, effective action comes. Because an intelligence that is greater than the conditioned movement of thought is suddenly able to operate in and through you. And so that state of complete alignment with what the Buddha actually called the suchness of things, which is always what is here and now.

I call it the form that this moment takes. This moment, of course, is the only moment there is. Is it?

No, I don't agree with that. There is a next moment. Okay, that was somebody's mind.

There is only this moment ever. Nothing could be outside of it. Nothing could happen outside of it.

It has to be now for anything to be. Being is now. Life can only be now.

You could remember something that happened. How was it possible that this happened? It happened in the field of now.

It happened when it was now and I remember it now. Now is the only reality it has. And the future, there seems to be so much of it, until there is very little.

And that can be frightening. Your future shrinks. Your past grows.

And you are gradually pushed out of your life. On one level, past and future seem so real. Time, past and future, on one level, yes, you can't deny it.

That there is such a thing. Time, everything passes so quickly. It's fleeting.

Gone. Gone. My childhood.

Gone. My first marriage. Gone.

Gone. Second marriage. Gone.

And so there is... Please stop, you say, to time. I don't want to be dragged along this stream of time towards my inevitable doom.

But you can't stop it. So on one level, time seems to dominate everything. And yet, on another level, past and future don't exist.

There is only now. Always now. One can't really argue with that.

That your life is always this moment. Your life cannot not ever be this moment. So on one level, you have what appears to be very real, and yet, it's always now.

Let's stay with that fact, because this is a practical session, not philosophical. Discourse on time belongs somewhere else. There's a practical fact that it's always now.

And if I'm never in alignment, or extremely rarely in alignment with now, then that means I'm out of alignment with life itself. Which means the power that is inherent in life the intelligence that is inherent in life the beauty that is inherent in life cannot fully express itself through this contracted entity that spends most of its time, its nows,

needing to get somewhere else. The next moment.

Which is really only a thought. Future is a thought. A mind movement.

So when we see that, and we also see another strange fact that first we see there is only ever this moment. So you might as well make friends with it, since you haven't got anything else. Hmm.

But then a strange thing happens. People believe that the now is very short-lived. They think a now is only a brief thing.

I think in one of the leaflets about this afternoon together it said spend an afternoon in the now. That will be the longest now you've ever experienced. But of course, yes, this is what this is about.

Now, the fact that change happens continuously doesn't mean that there are many different nows. The form that this moment takes changes. Continuously.

The field of now remains. Often things happen that are challenging in the now. It is very strange that when you allow whatever form this now takes to be as it is, the deeper level of your being opens up.

This is a miracle. When you see it in your life, how your life changes as you live in alignment with what is rather than against what is, that is the end of hundreds of thousands of years of conditioning and you are stepping out of thought. Because it is the movement of thought that judges continuously what is as not enough, not good, or needs more than this.

The movement of thought, the thought-made entity always needs more. I'm not full enough yet. Not complete yet.

It never is. Where is the next thing that I can identify with? That's why people look so uneasy a lot of the time.

Because they are looking for the next thing to make their sense of self a bit more complete. A bit more, please. Okay, more.

And the more is supplied by the next moment, which doesn't exist. It's a dreadful way to live. And you see another fact.

For thousands of years the Buddhists have already recognized that everything in this universe is interconnected. And now physicists also see that ultimately there are no isolated events or isolated phenomena. There is a web of interconnectedness that is the entire cosmos.

It is all connected to everything else, not what appears to us as an isolated event is

connected to the totality on deeper levels. And that is good to realize. And this brings us to the strange fact of the inevitability of this moment.

Because the totality of the universe has brought this about. It happens because it cannot be otherwise. And then you allow it.

You see that connectedness and you allow what is to be. You bring a yes to it. Suddenly, and now I'm using words to describe something that is really beyond words.

With this yes to what is now, something opens up which I can only describe and many of you already know have had glimpses of it or it's already very strongly present in your life. I can only describe as there is a sense of space around what happens when you allow it to happen. A spaciousness in which this event, and that is an inner sense of space, a spaciousness in which this event is happening.

It could be, for example, the obnoxious behavior of some person close to you. She is doing it again. He is doing it again.

Before it brought up the inevitable and suddenly you see the inevitability of this moment. And suddenly you allow and so the event comes and there is the... or something breaks down and you go, oh, it's allowed.

That's strange. There is the event or let's say some dreadful noise happens suddenly and usually there would be reaction. Oh, this shouldn't be, they should, why don't they?

And suddenly you allow it. Oh, suddenly there is a space around it, a space around what happens. One could also call it a peace around what happens.

And you can notice it particularly when you do this, when something so-called unpleasant happens and you allow it. There is suddenly a space around it, a larger context in which that happens. And that space is a space of peace around it.

Some people had to be driven by life to an extreme form of suffering before that happened to them spontaneously inside. And in the midst of hell on earth, in the most dreadful conditions, something inside them stopped resisting this moment. And there was a vast sense of peace and space despite the appearance of evil or badness in this moment.

That is the inner shift. It's not when you demand that the world should change. People have been demanding that for a long time.

But allow the is-ness of things and see what happens then. Because the allowing is the arising of the new state of consciousness. If it were not arising in you, these words would be meaningless.

You would not understand even what it means when I say allow this moment to be or

you would feel threatened by it, shout something and run out of the room. And so that is what in spiritual language is sometimes called surrender. What really is alignment, inner alignment with what is.

Now, what that really means is for thousands and thousands of years human beings have been totally absorbed in what I sometimes call object consciousness. Their entire attention goes into thoughts that arise often in reaction to things that happen. Every thought is an object in your consciousness and takes up your entire attention.

And so people inhabit their entire life is crammed full with thoughts, object consciousness. Now let's think about this, and then the next thing, and then the next thought comes. Each thought absorbs your attention.

Each thought is connected to the me thought form. No space. Complete absence of space.

Just one thing after another, one thought after another. And what arises with the yes to what is, is space consciousness. Another word for that is stillness.

Inner stillness arises through the simple yes to now. And that is the new dimension of consciousness. And that is the essence of who you are.

So you are, on the one hand, something that is manifested in form. You have a form identity. A life situation.

Every person here is somehow, one could almost say, trapped in their particular life situation. Most of them problematic to a larger or lesser degree. The more the new consciousness is arising in you, the more the problematic nature of your life situation lessens.

Not that life does not present challenges anymore, but you no longer perceive your life in terms of problems. So there is your life situation, and that differs for each one of you. Some are asking themselves what their life purpose is on this planet.

What am I going to do with my life? Others may not have that much future left. In some of you the body may not be healthy.

In others there may be some very problematic configuration of events in your life. Life situations differ. Some are rich, some are poor.

Some are important in the eyes of the world. Some are not important in the eyes of the world. Or some of you may be important today and unimportant tomorrow in the eyes of the world.

I was unimportant for many years. Now I'm important in the eyes of the world. And then, who knows, next year I may be gone in the eyes of the world.

That sense of who you are that's derived from your life situation, which is in the corresponding thought forms, we are going beyond that. We respect that. Yes, you are in this particular situation, in those relationships.

These are things that you cannot deny. There is the story of me. There is the story of my life.

And it's not going to come to an end this afternoon. No, the story of me continues. Because that is part of my form identity.

And some stories are happier than others. But there is a strong element of unsatisfactoriness and unhappiness in every story. Not just yours.

The element of unsatisfactoriness is built into the very structure of this mind form that is the story of me. But it is only unsatisfactory as long as you are looking for some self-fulfillment, some enhanced identity through improving your life situation or the story that you are telling yourself about who you are. Then it's always unsatisfying.

But when you realize that on that level you are never going to be satisfied, on that level true completion is never reached, you can never truly know yourself no matter how much you add to yourself through knowledge, possessions, relationships, whatever experiences, even spiritual experiences, wanting them to add to me. There are many people here who have had many great spiritual experiences. Come.

Okay, let's hang on to that one, that was good. And you can tell yourself the story, I had a great insight once. I had a vision and now it's left me.

But I hope it's going to come back. That's the, on that level to seek something, it means to seek something that the world, because the story is the world, can't give you. The demand to be made happy through some rearrangement in your story is an impossible demand.

The demand to be made happy by the world. Make me happy, I have a right to be made happy by the world. It is true, one could say that you have a right to the state of joy as your natural state of deep inner connectedness when you know who you are beyond thought.

It's not even that you have a right, that's a conceptual thought, it just is. But the world isn't even here to make you happy. Oh, that means, oh, if it's not here to make me happy, then what is it here for?

It's to wake you up. One could say the world is here to make you conscious. And to make you conscious until a certain point is reached, the world makes you suffer.

Because you make demands and you have expectations that the world cannot meet. And

you suffer. The story becomes the story of the poor me.

And even if the story temporarily becomes victorious, I made it. And then a little while later, the up has become a down. What now?

You can make it become President of the United States and then forget that you even were President of the United States. And that's, it's not, it's half fleeting. A former President of the United States is suffering from the disease that many people, older people now have loss of memory.

He doesn't remember that he was once President of the United States. That was me. That is half fleeting, but it's not different from any other life.

You can become an old man or woman and then you're 95. And then you, was that a dream? Or did that all happen?

You wake up in the morning, did I dream my life? Or did it all happen? And it's not much difference.

Not very much difference. The only question is, are you waking up out of that dream? Which ultimately is, the entire world of phenomenal existence has a dream-like quality to it because everything evaporates so quickly.

And then you still hang on to thought forms, but it's gone. And for many people, this dream-like existence has been somewhat of a nightmare. And that is good.

Because only a nightmare will want you to wake up. Will make you want to wake up. I can't stand this dream anymore.

Then for a while you demand that this dream must change. And for a little while you rearrange it and it becomes a little bit more pleasant. You have a new identity.

I'm now rethinking myself. A new me. You can tell yourself some new story, but it's another story.

So the waking up is knowing yourself, who you are beyond the story and that cannot be defined through any concept or word. You can only know it at this moment. And here, as the aliveness, the alert presence in which what you are perceiving at this moment is taking place.

You are perceiving the voice, the room, the man on the chair, allowing it to be as it is. And you become aware, one could say, of your own presence as the field in which that perception happens. So you are the presence that makes this possible.

And at the deepest level, one can say, you are the now in which everything happens. And that is the arising from within of something that has nothing to do with your life

situation. It has nothing to do with whether you have another 50 years to live or another 5 months to live.

And nothing to do with whether the world is telling you that you are important or the world is telling you that you are unimportant. What difference does it make? It's a story in the head.

And what remains is always the aliveness, the incredible aliveness of this moment, which you don't even know when you are running away from it, deny it, resist it. The incredible power that is hiding behind whatever is happening at this moment and that is not a power that is separate from who you are. It is consciousness itself, which is the essence of your being.

Not the form that it takes, that's temporary. So you could be sitting on a bus in a state of, yes, beautiful underlying sense of aliveness as you watch the streets go past you, people come in, sit next, and you are there as an alive presence. And then the dreamlike nature of the phenomenal world becomes actually very enjoyable.

All these life forms, the continuous flux of beautiful life forms coming together, separating, even the traffic can be beautiful when the mind isn't saying, this shouldn't be. It's all energy movement. Some of it may be a little mad, but that's because humans don't know who they are, so they create a somewhat mad civilization.

But you don't contribute to the madness anymore, you allow that also, and through the allowing, something that is not mad arises. It can only arise through you. Can't wait for others to wake up.

I'm not waking up unless you do. You go first. So you sit in any situation, or you are standing at the bus stop and the rain is blowing in your face and it's windy and it's cold, and it is.

And there's, in the absence of the story which says, I'm 45 years old and I'm still standing at the bus stop, I don't have a car, or I had a car and it's gone. This is what my life has come to. Look at those greedy people driving around in their big cars, I hate them.

Life just isn't fair. And the story goes, and very often the story of me clashes with the form that this moment takes. This shouldn't be, but it is.

So there can be two people standing at the bus stop, perhaps two people who have had similar experiences. They had, they became wealthy, and they were married, and then they lost it all. Went bankrupt, the wife left, the children don't want to see them anymore, and they're standing at the bus stop.

One person is standing there with a story running through his head, and it's miserable.

Getting wet, because that adds to the story. The wind.

The most miserable existence. And the other man experienced the same thing. And he's there.

Hmm. Cold, yes, getting a bit wet here also, yes. Wet is wet.

There's no suffering in wet. And then he notices, because he allows this moment without imposing a story on it, the air still smells good, or the sky, the cloud. First of all, he will see some beauty somewhere, even in the city, but more importantly, he will feel an underlying aliveness, an underlying goodness that has nothing to do with what form this moment takes, and nothing to do with the mental story that you're telling yourself about your identity.

This means your identity has shifted, when you are no longer invested, investment of self in the story, your identity has shifted from a narrative, from a story to something much more real. Presence. You are a conscious field of presence at this moment.

And you discover an underlying power and aliveness and goodness to this moment, even if the external form that it takes isn't all that great. And the miracle that happens, because you are now connected with the greater intelligence, with the power of life itself, even on the external level, life tends to become more supportive and helpful, because you are not fighting life anymore. Helpful factors come in, coincidences happen more, it no longer matters that much, because this moment is as it is.

And in knowing that it is as it is, a goodness reveals itself to you that was not apparent when you only saw the surface appearance of this moment. That goodness is not passive. That goodness is an active power that then comes through you, manifests through you.

And it may well be, to carry on with the analogy of the two men, you might say something to the man who is burdened with his unhappy story, just a word or two, and perhaps there's a beginning of an awakening in him, a tiny moment where he steps out of his story. And so you become, when you no longer, yourself is no longer in your story, you become, one could almost say, a blessing on this planet. Because something that is deeper than the person, a force, a power, that is you and yet deeper than you, can express itself through you.

And then it becomes your life purpose to be an expression of that whatever form that may take externally. But for this to happen, it is necessary that you step out of your identification with a storyline and see, yes, of course you have a history, but to not tell yourself that story at every moment, but to be here, take your attention out and be here. And when you notice suffering arises, it's resistance, the story is back, the suffering me is back, and you can step out again.

So an alertness comes every time you step out of the story. And a dreamlike thing happens when you fall back into identification with what you're telling yourself in your head about yourself. It's like really, you can see now why in spiritual language the term awakening is used, because it is truly an awakening out of thought.

And when you fall back into thought and into the story, you can see the difference in consciousness of falling back in into... You're asleep. Maybe not snoring, but almost.

Almost. And so that presence, that is the key that as you go through your life, frequently step out of the story, because the story is happy and unhappy and happy and unhappy, or in some cases unhappy, unhappy, unhappy. The intervals of happiness and unhappiness vary, but unhappiness will come again if it's not here now, if you're there in the story.

You could have a perfect existence, good job, beautiful husband or wife, loving, beautiful, faithful, plenty of money too, beautiful children, all doing so well, nice house, two cars, everything is so great. It can't stay like that. Something will come in eventually.

Life does that. And if it stays like that for a very long time, the greater the shock when something does come in. That means some kind of loss somewhere, some interference, something not going as it should, and the awakening begins.

Let's be grateful for your sufferings, because you wouldn't be here otherwise. Let's be grateful for the unhappiness, the story that you had to live with. It worked.

The unhappiness worked because it took you here, and here made the realization that the unhappiness and the suffering has served its purpose, has taken you into awakening. And once the momentum of awakening has happened, suffering becomes optional, and you are able to choose presence, to choose the yes to now, to choose to walk on the narrow, this very narrow path that is now. And more and more past and future are only there when you need them to refer to, make an appointment for next week, arrange to meet someone, say I'm going to study this for the next three years, okay, practical, then you're back to now.

If the next three years you're going to spend every moment hoping to get to the end of the three years, then every moment is reduced to a means to an end. Life loses its aliveness, loses its power, loses its beauty. A continuous stepping back into now, out of time, out of identification with thought, into the fullness of now.

And some people had to go through enormous suffering to learn this, more suffering perhaps than anybody here, suffering to the point where they couldn't stand it anymore. And suddenly the shift happened, and there was an inner yes to now. Oh, what's happened?

Can't explain it. Suddenly there's a vitally alive peace. That's the peace that passes all

understanding and can be there no matter where you are in your life situation.

It can be there whether it's good or bad at the moment. If it's very good, you're more likely to be drawn back into the dream world. Oh, it's great, let's have another drink until the next shock happens.

So we are becoming familiar here with the state of presence. Alert, an alert acceptance of what is. With little things, big things.

And if you fall back into reactivity, you fall back into a no, then you recognize it. Oh, there goes another no. Okay.

Except you're unhappy, which means the story in your head, telling yourself why you are unhappy and have every right to be unhappy and could not not be unhappy. Everybody would be unhappy in my situation. One of the thoughts I had since childhood that went on until the age of 29, whenever something went wrong in my life, the thought came, oh yeah, it's got to always happen to me, bad things always happen to me, always.

And they did. That was a, at least I knew who I was, or I thought I did, an unhappy me. And I could have told you many reasons why I had every right to be unhappy.

Perhaps everybody in this room could do that. And yet most of you have stepped out of that already. But occasionally you get drawn back into the story.

So the only teaching this afternoon is presence. Is that state of consciousness. The state of yes.

Yes to life. That's all. Yes to life.

No matter what, yes. And where is life? Here, now.

Now, you can wait for the next challenge, or you can do it now. And that's an enormous shift. You no longer need a challenge to wake you up.

You are choosing to wake up. Ultimately you are not separate from the totality, so you cannot choose. Okay.

There is no separate entity, but you can. We have different perspectives, different levels of looking. It is a helpful way of looking at yourself and realize that you can choose to be present now.

You can choose to step out of the story of me. You can choose to step out of the heaviness of my past and the anxiety of my future and constant preoccupation with that. You can choose to say, no, I'm not having this, I'm having this.

Because only this is real. This is now. And so that choice is there.

If you look more deeply, it may well be that when you perceive this as having choice, at that moment, something greater than you, and yet not separate from you, ultimately you, is moving through you and expressing itself. And then you say, okay, I choose presence. Good.

And then every challenge that comes into your life, suddenly instead of pulling you back into reaction, which it does usually, you can hold presence when nothing is happening, everything is fine. As somebody wrote to me, I can be spiritual when I'm sitting alone in a room. But the moment I start interacting with people, I lose it.

And by divine grace, it is a fact that people are difficult quite often. They're also wonderful if you look deep enough. Beautiful.

But you often have to look deep underneath the surface. First you have to go underneath the surface in yourself to reach that which is underneath the surface in others. If you haven't gone deeper than the surface self in yourself, you will be relating to another surface self.

One story relates to another story. And the other story of me may be a competing narrative. And whether you have a big argument, or whether you get out a machine gun, it's only a question of degree.

So this afternoon is the arising of that here. And the mind says, I don't know if it really is arising. How can you be sure that it is arising?

Can you prove that it is really happening? Because, of course, it cannot be understood through thought. The very essence of this arising is something is arising that is deeper than thought.

And in the intermediate stage of this, thought becomes less heavy in your life. Thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. Thought for a while still goes on with its old records or CDs.

I used to say records and then one editor crossed it out and put in CD. I hadn't realized that things had changed. But it comes to the same thing.

Better sound quality doesn't make much difference as far as this is concerned. I can now hear myself much better. The unhappy story is much more clear now.

So the old records come back sometimes. But an interesting thing happens. You might notice that you are not totally in it anymore.

The same thoughts may still come, but there is a little bit of space between you, in fact you are the space, and the thought. Is this the old thought? Oh yeah, that is happening to me, all the bad things that happen to me.

And then you may find yourself smiling occasionally when an old thought, an old interpretation happens of yourself or someone else. So as this shift happens, thought loses its heaviness and ultimately its capacity to make you unhappy because nothing really ever makes you unhappy than a thought. And so you have a space between yourself and thought, or to put more accurately, more and more you sense yourself to be a deeper and vaster spaciousness in which occasionally thinking happens.

And then you will find that new thoughts occasionally come in that are actually creative, fresh, alive, and have a positive contribution to make to this world, as an insight, something you say to someone. It just comes out of you. There was no intention.

You just say the one thing that this person needs to hear and it comes out of you. And so that happens more and more. Thought loses its power to make you unhappy and the thought that does occur tends to become inspired and helpful.

It is no longer self-invested thinking. You've stopped looking for an enhanced identity through constructing some new thoughts, through identifying with some new thought form, whether it be a flashy car, which you want to add to myself as a thought form. It's not the car that is added to yourself.

It's the thought form that matters, which says, It's me, I am the Rolls Royce. It's mine. It gets incorporated into the story of me.

And then I got the Rolls Royce. I made it. I made it.

Until after six months, it's not fulfilling. You're sitting there driving, it's not fulfilling anymore. Maybe that wasn't the right car.

Maybe too many other people have Rolls Royces. Well, in London they do. You have to think of something else.

I need a different thought form to make me really feel special. Ah yes, I thought it was in my ear. Let's wait until it goes and accept that it's here right now.

It works. One person is not quite accepted yet somewhere in the room. It's an amazing thing when this is just a sound, of course.

But even that can be disturbing when you are looking for something to be disturbed by. And even with a little thing like that, it's amazing to see that that which was disturbing when it's no longer resisted is surrounded by peace. And that applies to small things, like that sound.

It also applies to big things. One could almost say anything can take you there. Anything can take you into peace.

Any condition that arises now that is not resisted. And very often if it is unpleasant or not

harmonious, very often it will quickly disappear. And many of you have experienced that in your own life.

That things that you did not want but were there didn't go away until you completely accepted that they are there. And suddenly they were gone. And similarly something that you want in your life, many of you have also experienced that already, when the wanting goes, wanting implies future and so on, suddenly it's there.

When your inner, your sense of self no longer depended on it, it's there. So miracles happen through surrender. Incredible miracles, both small miracles and big miracles happen through surrender.

I recommended a film called Groundhog Day, which shows the human condition as one man is forced to relive the same day again and again and again. And he hates it. And he can't get out of it.

And he hates it even more. And he tries to commit suicide and he kills himself many times and every morning he wakes up again in the same day. Until finally he doesn't resist anymore.

Finally he allows that to be. And that day from being the most dreadful day becomes transformed into a nice day. He helps so many people because his resistance is gone.

That day becomes beautiful, wonderful and in the end he doesn't want to believe it anymore. Let's stay here, he says. And then he's out of it.

A beautiful parable. And so although in the media to a large extent the old consciousness is still reflected, occasionally these days you can see the new consciousness coming through here and there in films. They may not even be on the surface spiritual.

We call it spiritual as such. And yet something is coming through the new. Whether it be a film about playing golf, the legend of vagabonds, a film about stillness and connect with animals, which I saw recently, although it's quite old, the horse whisperer.

Somebody who is able to enter the state of stillness and communicate with horses through stillness. And even American Beauty is a film that brings in something, a new consciousness comes in, what is possible. That last one I mentioned is a film where you are shown a piece of paper being tossed about by the wind.

And you watch that for two minutes and it's beautiful. It's miraculous. It's something nobody would look at twice.

Every moment when you give it your attention has a beauty sometimes on the surface, sometimes hidden underneath the surface. On the surface in nature, how your perception of nature deepens when you are present as you walk in nature. The depth

that a flower has that it didn't have when you labelled it mentally immediately because you relate it to a mental label, not to a flower.

Oh, look at that beautiful so-and-so, blah, blah, blah. No, truly look. And then the beauty that is hidden, hidden even and particularly in the face of disaster, loss and death, which everybody sooner or later will face, in him or herself, and will also face with people close to you.

And there the beauty is not apparent immediately on the surface of things, on the surface of that moment. And the thinking mind can only see the surface and reacts to the surface phenomenon of this moment. And at this moment something or someone may be dying.

And the mind calls it dreadful, bad. If death is dreadful, bad, awful, then all of life is dreadful, bad, awful. Every form is destined to die.

Each one of us in this room could have a date of death imprinted on his or her hand. And you look, oh, what's my date? Well, it'll happen.

When it happens, it won't be tomorrow, but now. So if death is bad, then nothing makes sense. The whole of life is misery because everything is already condemned, the moment of birth, everything is already condemned to death.

What a dreadful, tragic, cruel world that is if death is bad. But it's a fact, it is. And what it conceals is beautiful and sacred.

And I want to point to this without giving you any explanation, mental or conceptual thing that explains it somehow so that you can rearrange in your mind the way in which you judge death. Maybe it's not so bad after all. You'll have another incarnation.

It can go on. You'll have another opportunity to be miserable. To look more closely at death without taking refuge in concepts, beliefs.

Because you may believe or not believe that there's another incarnation coming. I'm not saying there is or isn't because we are not dealing here with belief. If I say, yes, you will reincarnate, some of you will say, great, I knew that already.

And some others will say, oh, I don't think that's true. And it would require belief. Nothing here requires really belief on your part.

So we'll stay with just the fact of death which comes sooner or later, which also comes in other forms in your life as loss, great loss of one kind or another, of physical ability, of social status, of a partner, somebody leaves you, something leaves you, and of course the actual death of a human being or the sense of your own approaching death. And usually this is regarded as so dreadful that you can't even talk about it. In hospitals, even

now, they don't mention it ever.

Oh, no, you're not going to die. No, no, nobody dies here. And so facing what is becomes very powerful when that which is, is death.

And you face death without seeking refuge in some explanations. Just face it as you would face a flower or anything that appears, takes form in this moment. But when something dies, one could say it's not that something is taking form at this moment.

It's more beautiful than that. It's beautiful if something takes form at this moment. You could call that birth.

But death is something loses form at this moment. The form of life dissolves. And when that is faced completely, that which is beyond form shines through the dissolving form.

And that is why although the present moment is always sacred and you know that when you move your attention into it, it could be anywhere, and I don't need to define further what that means. Only the mind would ask, please define sacred. I don't understand.

You know what it means directly at this moment when you hear that this moment is always sacred but you don't know this unless your attention moves and you become aligned with it. It's always sacred, but it is more deeply sacred at the moment of death, which could be your own death or death of somebody close to you. Even the death of not necessarily a human being but the death of some form that contained your sense of self, it dissolves.

And more people have realized the truth of who they are and the truth of life through death, through facing death or some great loss, which is the equivalent of death, more people have realized it through that than through any spiritual teaching. Something that was defined in form loses its form. And if you've ever been with someone, I've spoken to many people who sat next to someone who died and also one or two people who actually died and came back.

And whenever that fact of death was not resisted, it was realized as a moment of incredible depth and sacredness. A woman I met witnessed how her son, 30-year-old son, died in hospital. She was sitting next to him.

And she said that was the most sacred moment of her life and she was never the same after that. And that acceptance only, in her case, lasted for two minutes. After that, thought came in.

And the emotions that come with those thoughts came in and it was called dreadful. But for two minutes, she was in the state of acceptance and that was at an incredible depth in sacredness. And even if you have seen people that were approaching death, sometimes you can see, already before actual physical death happens, the form is

already becoming, one could say, transparent almost.

And something shines through that is almost described as light. And what that is, is the unconditioned, the essence, consciousness itself, shining through the dissolving form. So the most sacred thing in life is that which is most feared by the egoic entity.

Because the egoic entity is form, is identification with form as me, is identification with the physical form as me, in the psychological form, the story of me. And that goes. In some cases, when people know they are going to die soon, it can happen, that before the physical form dissolves, the psychological form of me doesn't survive in the face of death when it's accepted.

So already the me entity that perhaps they were controlled by, identified with throughout their lives, shortly before death, it could be a few days, a few weeks, a few months, already dies. And then a flowering happens through that human being. It's the realization of who they are beyond the form.

They realize it, not as some intellectual realization, a deep experiential realization, as deep peace. And a knowing beyond needing any kind of proof that there is no death, that it is a form dissolving. And people have realized it in the face of great loss when some form that they had invested with self left them.

It could be the loss of a partner, it could be the loss of all your possessions in the stock market crash. In the stock market crash, they happen occasionally, some people jump out of the window. They cannot separate, this is famous in the 30s or whenever it happened, many people apparently lost all their money and many jumped out of the windows.

They could not separate from their story-based sense of self. And the story-based sense of self was deprived of their main ingredient. But it has happened to others who in the face of total loss, which is a kind of death, experienced a sudden inner opening up, a sudden space.

Why was there a sudden inner space? Because the inner form that they had identified with in their psychological form identity, dissolved, died. When a form dissolves, that which is deeper than form shines through the hole that it leaves, the opening.

This is an amazing thing. And it applies to every kind of death. An opening appears, one could say, in the fabric of phenomenal existence.

For a moment, that opening appears in what before was a dense fabric of phenomenal existence. And suddenly, within that density of the fabric of phenomenal existence, a little thing there dissolves. And for a moment, just light comes through.

Whereas before it was filtered through many layers of texture. And so the deepest

spiritual thing is death. And that is good to know because each one of you will face it sooner or later.

But the amazing thing is, this is death here. Because the form identity, that which I thought I was, the thought form of me, you realize is not me. It dissolves as a me entity.

So here, and this is the beauty of true spiritual teaching, in the presence of true spiritual teaching, which is not of a person, the teaching that is happening here, if you even call it teaching, is arising out of this energy field. And each one of you contributes to this teaching. To have a true view of it, you would look upon it as if it were, these words are arising out of your own consciousness.

There is no separation. And so a true spiritual teaching is similar to death. It also is an opening where suddenly spaciousness appears where before there was only form, identification with form.

So you lose your fear of death here because you are dying already. It's voluntary death. And it's beautiful.

And you realize, of course, people think life and death are the two opposites. Of course they are not. Birth and death are the opposites.

One can't exist without the other. Life has no opposite. Life is beyond form.

And it's that realization. When a thought subsides in your mind, even if only for a moment, that's death, ultimately speaking, because as one thought subsides, the next one has not appeared yet. There also is an opening.

And so this becomes a state of permanent connectedness as long as you still walk around in this form, a state of permanent connectedness with that dimension of the formless one life that you are, the one consciousness that you are. That is the essence of all life forms that could be anywhere in the universe. The essence of that, the one intelligence, the one consciousness manifesting as billions of life forms.

One of them, the appearance of a person with a name, a little history, a little past, a little future, and then that form dissolves. And to realize that which is beyond form frees you from identification with form, which is the world. And do you realize it?

Here, now, when thought subsides. And in many of you, spaces, although really one should only use this word in the singular, but I'll just for a while use it in the plural, spaces in many of you of pure awareness, pure presence, are arising already in your life. So that is the beautiful death that is already happening, which is the transformation of consciousness.

You don't have to wait for physical death to come close to you. When it comes, it's

beautiful. But you don't have to wait for that.

You can embrace that now. And that is the transformation where you are no longer identified with a form. The form is still there, yes.

The story is still there, but it's not who I am. My life situation is still there. It might be good, it might be bad.

It's not who I am. Who am I? I am that which is prior to all form.

Is that a belief? No, any belief is form. How do I know that?

I know that in the stillness of presence. I know that when I can look upon something, whether it be a flower, a tree, or even a man-made thing, although nature is more conducive to this realization, you look upon something without the old compulsive need to immediately label, interpret, or call it something, or see how you relate to it, how it fits in with me and my story. You just look and there is a clear space of awareness and it can happen in this moment as you sit here.

You're perceiving the words as if they were coming out of yourself. You're perceiving, perhaps, a body sitting on a chair. You're perceiving peripherally the rest of this room.

It's there. And the amazing thing, those perceptions are arising in awareness. They are not labeled, interpreted, judged.

You don't need to find a personal relationship to those perceptions. They are allowed to be. They are now.

They are allowed to be. So what you have at any moment, the one moment, no matter what form it may take, the moment always has two dimensions. And this is so important.

It should be what children could learn at the age of six, the first thing at school, the one important realization in everybody's life is this. There are two dimensions. Now usually humans are only conscious of one dimension, the world.

The dimension of objects that arise in consciousness as sense perceptions and thoughts and emotions. That is the world that most people inhabit, the world of object consciousness, sense perceptions, and of course you get drawn into them and then immediately the mind comes in with thought objects to find how thought relates to that perception and that perception. That is the world.

That is the human mind. That is the only world that people know and it's a fearful world because objects are not reliable. They come and go.

It's form. They are born, they die. So you have to hang on, something leaves you here, leaves there.

You inhabit only object consciousness and your whole sense of self is object consciousness. You have a self image. You have a conceptualized sense of self, of me, and every concept is a thought.

Every thought is an object in consciousness. That's the world people inhabit and they are looking for something to free them from that dilemma which everybody perceives with a life that human existence is a dilemma and everybody is looking somehow to get free but they are looking for freedom from the dilemma of human existence and the pain of human existence. They are looking for freedom in the realm of object consciousness.

Where can I find that thing that's going to free me finally? It could be a person, it could be some achievement, it could be some money, or it could be the idea that I have of spiritual enlightenment. I've just got to get there.

And then spiritual enlightenment becomes an object in your mind and you say, I need to have that. That will free me. I tried the two million dollars, didn't work, didn't free me.

I've tried the relationships, I've tried knowledge, but now another object in consciousness. So that's the world, and it's a world in which I'd like to quote, because that is the world of the collective world and the personal world of each human being consists of that because what is in the individual manifests as the collective, the collective of human history, which as I've quoted many times before, I love that quote, Churchill defined human history as one damn thing after another. And he's right.

And for many people in their personal lives, they could say that too. How's your life? Or how has your life been?

One damn thing after another. Just when I thought I made it, something else cropped up and didn't want that, or then I lost it again, or I thought it would make me happy, but it made me unhappy. As the old saying goes, there are two ways of being unhappy, getting what you want and not getting what you want.

And so looking, looking, looking, not realizing what they are looking for as if it were something external to them, as if it were something that can be obtained at some future point that never comes, instead of looking, the one where they are not looking is what they were looking for, that which frees them from that dimension, although you're still in it, but frees you internally, is quite simply the realization of the other dimension. So what I called object consciousness is the dimension of the manifested world, things everywhere, and the other dimension is the dimension of the unmanifested, and we could call that space consciousness, to realize that space is already here within you, and a few people have realized it through death, when something important in their object consciousness dissolved and left behind a gaping hole. And they faced it, somehow, for some reason, they just sat there and didn't run away from it, and didn't seek refuge in explanations, and just sat with it as the woman sat with her dying son, and the hole

appeared, and it was the most sacred moment in her life and changed her forever.

And that is already here now, and it's here, it begins to arise in the simple, the moment you look at a flower and perceive it, clearly, without any mental commentary. So at that moment, the two dimensions, you are conscious in the two dimensions, you are conscious of the manifested, and you sense that field of stillness, of presence, in which that perception happens, is the underlying unmanifested. It's the essence of who you are.

And perhaps then it's gone again, perhaps after a few seconds words come in, and then again another moment comes when you look upon something else, a stone, and there's the sense perception, and the old, deeply ingrained habit of automatic compulsive labeling is relinquished. And in some of you, in many of you, I know this is already happening spontaneously, and you may not even notice it, except as peace coming into your life occasionally. And then once you notice it, you can consciously contribute to it by more and more existing in this world, especially when no demands are being made, and often during the day, there are times when you can just be, you're waiting for something, standing somewhere, sitting somewhere, and simply perceiving, looking, hearing, whatever, what other perceptions there may be, and the perception arises in a field of simple presence or stillness. This is an amazing thing, but to the mind, the mind is thought, that is insignificant.

It says, what? It's not interesting. What's the next thing?

Okay, you've spoken about stillness, now let's go on to the next thing. It doesn't recognize it. What happened to me spontaneously, to this form, overnight there was a letting go of compulsive labeling.

There was deep surrender, and suddenly the next morning there was simply allowing everything to be as it is. The need to label was gone. Labeling could still happen when it was needed, but a lot of the time it wasn't needed, it isn't needed.

So I would walk around the city, especially the first few days or weeks, because it was totally new, and maybe some people thought I had taken something, and it is true that some people get a glimpse of that when they take a drug, and for a moment they are forced into presence, because their sense perceptions become so acute that they can't think anymore. And it can be a realization for some people of what life can be like without the constant noise in the head, that there can be space, but this doesn't last, the drug won't last, this is much better. The expression seen this, done that, or been there, done that, or whatever the expression is, that means it's all old, and for many people the older they get, the more lifeless their world becomes.

They get older, they have seen it all, they have done it all, nothing new, so the world becomes stale, not the world, but their state of consciousness, which is heavy with past.

And so breaking through that, that happened to me spontaneously, and I walked around in that state of every sense perception happened within a field of peace. And that was just amazing, I was walking around Oxford Street in London, one of the least peaceful places, a million people walking along, trying to do their shopping, buses and taxis in the middle with fumes, and I was walking around, it's peace, all the sense perceptions arising in a field of stillness.

And I didn't realize until much later, when I talked to a Zen monk, a year later, who said one sentence, he said, you just said, Zen is to stop thinking, that's all, that's what it is. And I, oh, that's what it is. I didn't know that I had stopped thinking.

And this is, I know, that this is the shift in consciousness that is destined to happen and is already happening on the planet. I know that many of you already spontaneously experience those kinds of perceptions, when you can simply look, here, just to mention the two main senses, the perception arises in an alert spaciousness, peaceful stillness. So you are not perceiving as a person anymore, as a me with a history, and the person, of course, wants something from the object of perception.

There's always some kind of relationship that the person is seeking to make with the object of perception. Either the person wants it, or the person fears it, or somehow trying to figure out how this object of perception fits into me. Is it important to me?

How can I, am I going to be more of me when I add that to me?

[Speaker 3] (2:36:42 - 2:36:43)

Hmm, hmm.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:44 - 2:40:15)

Yeah, okay, I want that, yeah. And then you, the flower that you were looking at, you pick it, because now you can take it home. It's mine.

Just a small example, it happens on all levels. You meet another human being. Again, how can you be with that being and look at that human being, listen to that human being, allow this moment to be, this human being that appears here in front of you at this moment, and just listen, just look without the person.

Is it possible to do that? Yes, it's possible, because it's time for that. And people are telling me it's already happening in their life and then it becomes obscured again and then it comes again.

But now that you can see it, you can contribute to it also by simply choosing presence and becoming aware of the underlying field, which is the deepest level of who you are. As the song that Kirtana sang at the beginning, the title of that was I am. Not I am this or

that, because that would mean identifying with an object in consciousness.

But when you identify, what remains is consciousness, I am. The innermost sense of who you are that got mixed up with identification with objects in your consciousness, the innermost sense remains. That which you are really fearful, that which you have a feeling as something of great value, something precious here, and I don't want to lose that, I don't want to die, but this precious sense of beingness, of aliveness, of presence, in the usual state, gets entangled with objects in consciousness, identifications.

And so you derive your identity from the story, the accumulated objects in your mind. But if you look to the essence of that sense of self, there is something real there, but it's not the story. At the core of it, there is something real, and that's consciousness.

Even the greatest illusion, the greatest dream, hallucination, in every illusion or hallucination, there must be something real in it, or otherwise it would not be. If it is, it is a form that consciousness has taken, temporary form. A hallucination is a form that only you see and nobody else agrees with.

The rest is this world. Everybody more or less agrees on what they see. In ultimate terms, one could say, it is also similar to a shared hallucination, especially the nightmare world of the ego.

[Speaker 3] (2:40:17 - 2:40:19)

Oh, dreadful.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:20 - 2:51:59)

So the simple thing, what looks so insignificant to thought, you can walk around the city, wherever you are at home, walking between here and your car, and simply be there, as an aware presence. The person, what do you need the person for? When you need to remember something, it will be there.

When you pick up the phone, you don't say, this is the nameless presence. Or as one man said, who wanted to teach me a lesson, when I asked him, when were you born? He said, I was never born.

Oh. Oh, sorry I asked that question. He is right, of course, although the way he said it was wrong.

It was an ego thing, but ultimately that statement is true. The essence is, who you are was never born. So the shift now is from being a heavy person, every person is heavy, there are degrees of heaviness, I am not talking about physical heaviness, psychological heaviness, there are degrees of heaviness, some persons are heavier than others, some are very heavy, wherever they step, nothing grows.

Humanity as a whole is heavy, the collective person that humanity is, and see what humanity is doing to the planet, one could almost say that somewhat humorous comment I made, could apply to the whole of humanity, nothing grows where they step, and that is the heaviness of the collective, unconsciousness. And so the shift then is from personal, exclusively personal sense of self to realizing yourself as aware presence, and be that. And you will find, because we are at a transitional stage in the shift of consciousness, it is possible that you may walk away from here, and never again fall back into resistance to what is, never again fall back into identification with thought movement, and be present for the rest of your life, which after all is only this moment ever, but always is possible.

More frequently it happens that you shift back and forth from being a person, and totally believing that you are a person, this means drama starts, you become an active participant in the drama of your story, and then suffering comes, and then you remember, oh, I forgot the now. Any suffering that arises in your life, it must mean you lost the now somewhere. I lost the now.

And then you go back into now, the space of now is OK. Whatever appears in the now I can face that. The now is never that complicated.

It comes, you face it, and action arises, or non-action arises, if there is nothing you can do. That's always simple. Even if you think there is a choice in this moment, should I do this or this or this, when you let go of trying to figure out through thought, you just face the situation.

Should I jump this way off, or should I jump that way? You just face it, and then you find yourself moving this way or that way. And that comes out of presence.

And so you face this moment, and your life becomes non-complex. And of course, the power is always there that arises out of consciousness or presence, the power to face what is, is always there. The only thing you can never face is the fantasies that the mind constructs of what might happen to you, or what you might lose, or what you might not get, or a situation that may arise.

What's going to happen? What am I going to say? What's going to happen to me?

Am I going to make it? And when? Am I going to make it before it's too late?

Have I missed it already? Is my whole life wasted? I've probably missed the boat already.

There's not much I can do now. So many mistakes I made. Oh, I could have achieved this and that.

Why didn't I? If only my parents had been different. Many people have this story and the story of their life has been a failure, wasted, not silly story.

Every story is unsatisfying. Even if it looks great for a moment, you get miserable again. It's built into every story.

Step out. Step out of it. We are just presence.

And then life is miraculous. Even the city. The dance of life forms.

Birds flying. You just look. Clouds.

Nature has depth to it because you don't go through it with a strain of mind. It's just there. Human beings, and this is so important, when that dimension, when that dimension of what I call space consciousness is present in your interactions with other human beings, that's what really everybody is waiting for, is for that dimension to arise.

They are waiting for you, one could almost say, every interaction. You can bring that. Who are you?

On the surface, you are a person. In your depths, you are consciousness. So you interact with humans in the same way that you look at a flower, allowing them to be.

They are what is at this moment. You look. Perhaps you sense the inner body so that you don't get drawn into mental stuff about them.

And you listen to them. And you listen without preparing the next statement mentally. You just listen.

You don't know. People used to come to me for counselling, whatever they called it, spiritual counselling sessions. And in the past, many people came with problems, sometimes heavy problems.

I didn't know the answer. I don't know the answer to these heavy problems. How could I know?

So all I could do was sit there with them and listen. And becoming comfortable with not knowing. Because that's part of it.

And the little egoic entity doesn't like that. It says, I need to know what this is all about. I need to know what you are about.

What are your motivations? What do you want from me? Whatever you can figure out about another person.

Is their conditioning combined with your conditioning? And it's a shared hallucination. And then you can be with someone and they're telling you their heavy problems.

And you know that you don't know. And you are comfortable with not knowing and allowing that space of simple listening to be there. But it's alert.

It's not a listening that goes to sleep. It's an alert listening. Relaxed alert.

So the words appear within that spaciousness that comes through this form. That is the dimension that most humans are not conscious of. The unmanifested space consciousness.

And when that dimension is present in this dimension, they're not really separate because they're intertwined. There is space consciousness even in... Let's leave that aside.

And suddenly within that space, things happen. Realizations happen. The person may stop speaking as sometimes happens.

The story suddenly peters out and they look around and suddenly feel there's a peace. What's this? One woman came with a heavy story and talked to me for half an hour or an hour about it.

And just spaciousness was there. I didn't know the answer. The problems were so complicated.

Nobody could have solved them. And after 30 or 45 minutes of talking, she stopped. And it was like waking up.

She had all these notes that she needed to all the problems and she put that... And she looked at me. And the next...

Her statement was a miracle. I couldn't believe it. She said, There's only love, isn't there?

[Speaker 3] (2:52:04 - 2:52:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:52:19 - 2:56:11)

Thank you. Goodbye, she said. At other times it happened that some answer came through me, just suddenly said something.

It just came out. Just like this talk comes out. It's not rehearsed.

It just comes out. Or something suddenly... Words come out of the other person's mouth.

It suddenly reveals something. But they arise because there's a space of presence. And that space is intelligent, vastly intelligent.

That is true intelligence. And it's only when you're connected with that, that love can be present, even in this world. Because it arises out of that.

It doesn't arise out of the object consciousness. That's the message. You know all that.

You recognize it. So your mission is clear. To be, to know yourself as awareness, as presence.

And to put up with the person, yes. Honor it also. It's the world of form.

You honor the world of form. You don't say, I don't want nothing to do with the world of form. All I want is God.

But you're still here. And the world of form will keep bothering you. We are talking, of course, of God's realization as the essence of your being.

I would like Kitana to come and sing her last song, which is my favorite song. If I cry, don't worry. I sometimes cry when I listen to that song.

And the title of that song refers to exactly what we have been talking about this afternoon, pointing to what we have been living, experiencing this afternoon. And it's nice sometimes to hear the same teaching, slightly different words, expressed again. So the title of that song is Who You Really Are.

And that's what this gathering is about. Knowing who you are beyond concepts, beyond the conceptualized sense of self. It's the end of the dreadful thing that is a conceptualized sense of self, the burden of that.

Listening to this is a beautiful meditation in itself. Thank you, Kitana.

[Speaker 2] (2:57:06 - 3:01:20)

For a storyline, more to life than the body can sense, than the mind can conclude from experience. Does who we are begin with breath, depend on form, or end with death? Strip away these roles, these names, and tell me what remains.

And who you really are, who you really are, we measure success by the things we accrue, or the bonds that we form, or the deeds we do. But these too will pass, as hard as we try to hold on to form. Form will die.

But inherent in this dance of form is the chance to see what's yet unborn, and the choice to throw this chance away and be caught up in the play. Of who we think we are, who we think we are. This is your lifetime, it could end at any time.

Where is your attention? Where is your prayer? Where is your song?

In a fortunate life comes a call to be free from the cycle of bondage and misidentity. To wake from the dream and finally realize the truth of one's being before the body dies. So before the final scene is passed, see the screen on which it's cast, see what's seeing this

me and you, and then you will see who you really are.

[Speaker 3] (3:01:23 - 3:01:37)

Who you really are. Who you really are. Who you really are.